Literary Cabinet.

Si non tantus fructus perciperetur ex his studiis, quantum percipi constat, sed ex his delectatio sola peteretur; tamen hæc animi remissio judicanda esset libero homine dignissima. CICERO.

VOL. I.] YALE COLLEGE, SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 1807. [No. 13.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE CABINET.

BELIEVING that a short account of the origin and formation of Yale College, its mode of discipline and tendency of instruction, will not be unsatisfactory to some of your readers, I take the liberty of presenting you a descriptive notice of this institution, which has been of very considerable importance in forming the religious and literary character of a portion of our country.

The design of founding a college in the colony of Connecticut, was originally concerted, by three clergymen, in the year 1698. The primary object, was the education of young men for the gospel ministry. The protestant universities in France, founded by their general Synods, were assumed as the model; and the first plan proposed, that a college should be erected, by a Synod of the congregated churches in the colony of Connecticut, and should be called the *school* of *the church*. There was, however, at this time no general Synod called: but during the next year, in the lesser conventions, ten clergymen were appointed, who were styled trustees, or undertakers, to found, erect and govern a college.

The trustees met at Newhaven, in the year 1700, formed themselves into a body, to consist of eleven ministers, including a rector, and agreed upon the foundation of a college. This agreement was carried into execution, at their next meeting at Branford in the following manner. Each member brought a number of books, and presenting them to the trustees as a body, said these words, "I give these books for the founding a college in this colony." The books were then taken possession of, by the trustees, and the library which they composed, was kept at Branford three years, was then removed to Killingworth, and afterwards to Saybrook. These books amounting to 40 vols. in folio, were the foundation of a seminary, which, by continued accessions to its revenues from private liberality, and public munificence, and by various gradations of improvement, has risen to that state of splendor and usefulness, which it now boasts.

It was soon conjectured, that contributions from the churches, and private donations, would be too precarious a ground, on which to rest so important a design, as the support of a college; and some doubts existing as to the legal capacity of the trustees, to hold real estate, the legislature were petitioned for a charter,

charter, which was granted, Oct. 9th, 1701.

In the same year the trustees resolved that for *the present* the institution should be fixed at Saybrook. The students however, resided in Killingworth, with the Rev. Mr. Pierson, who had been chosen rector. The first commencement was at Saybrook, on the 13th of Sept. 1702, at which the degree of Master of Arts, was conferred on four graduates of Harvard college, and on one person, who had received only a private education. The commencements were annually celebrated at Saybrook and the students continued their residence at Killingworth, until the rector's death which happened in 1707. He was succeeded in the rectorship, by the Rev. Mr. Andrew of Milford. The senior class were removed to Milford, and the rest of the students were placed under the care of two tutors, and removed to Saybrook.

In this situation the college remained several years. But the difficulties attending such an imperfect organization growing continually more numerous, and the impolicy of having the head of the institution, with a part of the students, separted by so great a distance from the seat of the college, becoming more apparent, it was finally resolved by the trustees, after much controversy, and a protracted deliberation, that the college should be permanently fixed at Newhaven, and the first commencement in this place was held in Sept. 1717.

The different interests which prevailed in various parts of the state, gave birth to a difference of sentiment on the subject of a removal, and the wishes of individuals, which could not be gratified were followed by dissatisfaction. The students separated, and resided in different towns in the state, nor was perfect harmony restored, until two years after the college was fixed in Newhaven.

Hitherto, no "collegiate house" had been built, and the students resided in private families, and attended prayers and recitations at their tutors' rooms. But in the year 1718, a building of wood was erected, in the south-eastern part of the area which fronts the present buildings, 172 feet long, 22 wide, and three stories high, and contained 50 studies, in convenient chambers, besides the hall, library and kitchen. Several valuable donations enabled the trustees to accomplish this work. During the last six years, many gentlemen of wealth, talents and generosity both in this country and Great-Britain, the principal of whom was Governor Yale, had contributed largely to the library, and to the pecuniary resources of the college.

In the year 1718, there was a splendid commencement at which time the college formally received its name. In a Latin memorial, expressive of a warm sense of gratitude, for the liberality which had been experienced, the collegiate school, in commemoration of Governor Yale's great generosity, was called after his name Yale College.

Having made these preliminary statements to give a general notion of the origin and formation of this institution, and arrived at the period when by a formal record it was determined that in the name of the college, the memory of an illustrious benefactor should be perpetuated, I must

decline any further detail on this head, since a complete historical description, from the period to which we have brought it, to its present high distinction, would engross too large a portion of your paper, and because its progress has been gradual and uniform, and not distinctly marked by many strong features, or much novelty of incident. [*To be continued.*]

MESSRS. EDITORS,
You are at liberty to dispose of the following as you may think proper.

THAT the learned are distinguished from the unlearned in point of superiority, is a proposito the truth of which, every judicious person readily assents.—But what constitutes the learned man, and where to draw the line of discrimination between the two, is a subject on which there is a great diversity of opinions.

There are many who make a liberal education the sure test of a man of science, and in whose dialect the scholar and the collegian are synonymous terms.

By others it is not unfrequently alledged, that a public classical education is a mere empty name; and that collegians are in no respect superior to the majority of men, who have never received a regular education. It is easy to discover from what description of persons these expressions escape, and that such unqualified assertions are no less destitute of candor than of truth. Far be it from me to insinuate any thing that may seem derogatory to the dignity of the true scholar, and man of polite literature. Yet it may not be ungenerous nor contrary to truth to assert the superiority which men of a systematic education possess over the great body of intelligent men who have not been liberally educated, is not so great as many are wont to imagine. Although this to some may seem paradoxical, yet as a general rule it coincides with fact and experience, and the opinion will, I trust, appear rational when we consider elementarily the progress of the human mind in its advances in knowledge.

Logicians in marking the steps pursued by the mind in accumulating and improving its knowledge have distinguished them by the name of operations of the mind. These are perception, judgment, reasoning and methodizing. As perception is the receiving of impressions, or ideas, from external objects, acting through the medium of the senses, it is manifest that in this manner alone, we derive all our original knowledge of the objects within the sphere of our acquaintance. Since therefore all men possess the same organs of sensation, and the student is by no means more conversant with the objects in nature than the man of active life, he cannot be supposed to possess any greater stock of original ideas. Men of active and inquisitive minds, in whatever condition in life fortune may have cast their lot, are nevertheless found to possess an enlarged and refined understanding. The mariner whose perilous course of life renders him a frequent witness to the commotion of the elements, the artificer, who is constantly dividing and fashioning natural bodies, and the husbandman, whose mind is continually intent on the operations of nature, are, each in his turn, men of experience and philosophers. Their knowledge is not derived from learned rules, neither are they versed in the dogmas of the

schoolmen, but they are philosophers by their own innate powers, under the great instructress---nature.

The business of science is to search out general principles, and and the researches of the men of rule, often terminate in theoretical speculation; but the man in active life, whose rules are taken from the great volume of nature, renders them subservient to his interest, by continually reducing them to practice. Nor will this seem at all surprizing that men are learned without rules, when we consider that the most splendid fabrics of science have been constructed from simple, detached propositions, and that many of the most wonderful discoveries in philosophy, have owed their origin to casualties, or to some slight hints strowed in the way of men who were conversant with the works of nature. The knowledge of the connexion between cause and effect, and that every effect must have had an adequate cause, is as well known to the peasant, as to the philosopher and although he cannot repeat the proposition, he can readily draw the inference.

Again, as judgment is the act of comparing ideas together and thereby determining their agreement or disagreement, svery sensible man may, in ordinary cases, form a judgment not less accurate than the man of science. For since in comparing two or more ideas together, we make use of certain intermediate ideas by which to measure them, nothing more is requisite to the man of common sense than a good fund of ideas, and if possessed of this he is rarely liable to mistakes in his decisions.

Accordingly we find in common life, that men who are by no means distinguished by learning or science, are nevertheless capable of giving the most able decisions on important subjects.

A just perception and sound judgment are seldom found in a person deficient in strength of intellect. However splendid his acquisitions may be, they are not so much the effects of culture, as the gifts of nature.

In reasoning and in methodizing, the man of seience possesses some advantage over others who have not been taught systematically. The art of reasoning is exceedingly complex, as well as difficult of acquisition, and to reason ably and skilfully is one of the highest exercises of the human faculties.

To constitute a profound reasoner, good sense, a quick perception and readiness of invention, together with an extensive knowledge of men and things are indispensably necessary.

Yet with all these qualifications, a man may prove unsuccessful in his attempts at argumentation and find all his scholastic knowledge insufficient to render him an able disputant. The truth is, reasoning, like every art and science has its practical, as well as speculative part, and whatever logicians may boast of the sufficiency of books and rules to form the perfect reasoner, it is practice alone which will raise him to any high degree of excellence.

The rules of logic, when well understood and skilfully applied, are no small auxiliaries to ingenious reasoning; but these alone do not necessarily render the man who possesses them superior to others who are ignorant of them; nor are they indispensible to sound reasoning. It is not from abstract rules, but from our intercourse

with the living world, that perfection in this art is obtained.

Experience evinces, that even those who were the most distinguished disputants in the school, when they have descended to the walks of common life, have been no less prone to deviate into the paths of error, to be involved in the clouds of passion, and to be misled by the phantoms of imagination, than the illiterate class who are strangers to the fastidious definitions and rules of logicians.

They who possess common sense in a competent degree, will discover with no other aid the fallacy of wrong reasoning. They who are deficient in it, will not find a substitute in the use of a syllogism.

To suppose that a vigorous and well informed mind stands in need of this slender aid, is no less absurd, than to imagine that the sturdy oak needs the support of the ivy which entwines it. How often do we find the student fresh from the school, elated with his academic attainments, and dealing profusely in premises, dilemmas, and syllogisms; who no sooner enters the list of disputants than he is confuted and foiled by a plain illiterate rustic. He may indeed play around the plain man with his scholastic definitions and technical terms, but this is a miserable subterfuge, where solid reasoning is wanting, and bespeaks the man a coward, who by any such evasion, recedes from the field of sober argumentation. After all our scientifical researches and ingenious theorizing, experience teaches that nothing but an acquaintance with the living world, and its various characters, will enable one to distinguish himself on the great theatre of action. Man is a creature of imitation, and is ever more strongly influenced by example than by precept.

Hence by an acquaintance with men of sense, and with those books in which sound and ingenius reasoning predominates, a man may acquire the art of reasoning ably, and even syllogistically, although he may never have heard of such things as major and minor propositions, of predicates and postulates, and many other logical appellations. We find even the illiterate, who have spent their lives in constant action, possessing an extensive knowledge of things, and a most accurate method of judging of them, a knowledge and a method which the cultivated, but inexperienced reasoner can seldom attain.

One of the chief advantages which the bookish man possesses over the greater part of the commonalty, is in my apprehension, a knowledge of definitions. To understand the meaning of terms, is the foundation of correct knowledge, since we cannot apprehend the ideas of another, whose phraseology is to us unintelligible. The literary world, when either writing or conversing on scientifical subjects, find it convenient and often indispensible, to use learned and technical terms. Without a knowledge of these, the illiterate are in a great degree excluded from a participation in many ingenious productions. Nor are they less liable to the impositions of the numerous scribblers, who through a spirit of mere pedantry and ostentation, dress up their sheer fustian, with the most pompous and sonorous language. This is by many made a subject of com-

plaint, that the learned choose to express their ideas in such perplexing and unintelligible terms, which they assert to be a matter of design, rather than of convenience intended to obscure the path to knowledge, and to keep a part of mankind in ignorance. Whether there are not those, against whom this may be justly alledged, I shall not assume the province of determining, but to say that this is the design of the generality of authors, is an assertion both ungenerous and malevolent.

Among the disadvantages to which the illiterate are liable, in consequence of their ignorance of definitions, this is not the least, that they are incapable of distinguishing the genuine from the spurious, mistaking pomp of language for profundity of knowledge. They are often induced to believe that some ingenious and brilliant sentiments lie concealed under specious titles and pompous expressions, which, on account of their inexplicableness, carry an air of mystery, and strike the mind with peculiar gravity and sublimity. As they have not learned systematically, nor have been accustomed to methodise their knowledge, although their information may be by no means circumscribed, they cannot make a proper classification of their ideas, nor determine under what department of knowledge any particular subject ought to be arranged. We often hear persons of improved understanding, but ignorant of definitions, seriously ask, what is meant by moral philosophy and logic? when at the same time they can converse ably and reason judiciously on those very subjects which these sciences professedly teach. And not unfrequently when the meaning of the terms is explained, these very persons are found to possess more extensive views of the maxims, a more thorough knowledge of the practical rules, belonging to these sciences, than those of whom they make the enquiry. In this manner, many have, perhaps all their lives, yielded the palm of superiority to those who were their inferiors in real knowledge, and who, by frequently introducing their learned and technical language, have amused them with an empty sound of words. Numbers there are who, unable to penetrate the veil of mystery in which they imagine science to be enveloped, suppose that a liberal education is capable of changing the very nature of man, and of conferring almost the power of working miracles. That passing through a public seminary renders one acquainted with objects which have no existence in nature, but the knowledge of which can be obtained through the all-producing medium of philosophy. How often is it remarked as a matter of astonishment, by the vulgar, that collegians do not differ essentially from other men, that they speak, act, and subsist, and are subject to the common lot of humanity. They expect to see us metamorphosed in all our looks, to lose the features of men, and to become such as Horace said he was when he that instant felt a rough skin settling on his ankles, and all upwards he was transformed into a white bird. They wonder we dont talk of something before unheard of, of objects in nature, incapable of being discerned without some new organs of perception, of things so concealed as to lie beyond the reach of mortal

view, and not within the bounds of human comprehension—not unlike the abstract ideas of Mr. Locke, or the occult qualities, abstract entities and substantial forms of Aristotle.

Finally, whoever is possessed of sound learning and true science, it matters not when, or where, he may have obtained it, let him be esteemed according to his merit, and he who is destitute of it, let not honorary titles nor academical diplomas furnish any pretensions for arrogating to himself the character of a learned man. While some ignorantly imagine that learning possesses a sort of magic power, and others decry all science, together with its votaries, the true scholar, by viewing the real limits and extent to which the human powers are capable of progressing, may learn at least how little can be known, and will be less prone to overrate his own attainments, or to despond because he cannot fathom infinity.

Forming a just estimate of the importance of knowledge, and possessing a consciousness of his own superior eminence, he may pity the ignorance and despise the invectives of the illiterate vulgar.

The Essayist.

No. IX.

NO quality of the mind more frequently occasions a disparity among men, than memory. The power of retaining and promptly calling into use our ideas, exists in degrees, as numerous as the rational beings in the world. There are some, whose minds appear to be naturally susceptible and retentive; others make their minds so, by attention and habit; and others naturally weak and habitually negligent, have minds capable indeed of receiving impressions, but they can no more recollect them than they can gather up water which is spilt on the ground.

Of these classes of men the first has an inestimable advantage in the attainment of knowledge. Yet those who rank under it are not, universally, pre-eminent in their abilities. For the existence of this truth two reasons may be given, neither of which is without exceptions, but both of which will, perhaps, comprehend all possible cases of misimprovement of a great memory. This quality may be incompatible with a good judgment; or, those who possess it may engage so warmly in pursuing learning, (from the ease with which they acquire it) as not to give themselves time for its digestion. Instances illustrating this position occur to me.

There is a man now living in this state, who can describe individuals whom he never saw but once in his life, (and then, several years ago) by the buttons which they wore on their clothes. After travelling a road he can tell you the situation of stones, of trees, and the construction of all the little bridges which he has passed. Yet this same man can hear a sermon or read a book and retain no more of them than any other person would.

Magliabecchi of Florence had an extraordinary memory. When he had read an author, he could tell how he treated the subject, what were his divisions, and the particulars which he ranged under each. He would even quote any passage in the words of it, and when he was consulted by learned men, as he frequently was, he would tell them the book and the page in which they might find what they were looking for.

So accurate was he in this respect, that his friends called him the "Universal Index." Being asked by the Grand Duke Cosmo III. (whose librarian he was) where a certain very valuable book might be found, he replied that there was but one copy in the world, and that was in the library at Constantinople, the seventh on the second shelf at the right hand of the entrance. He was so voracious of literary food, that though he had access to three magnificent libraries, he was never satisfied. During the latter years of his life he used to read only the table of contents and chief heads, of such books as he could lay his hands on, and then he would forever know the substance of what they contained. But this Magliabecchi, with such a memory, with such extensive reading, and though he lived to the great age of 81 years, never enlarged the bounds of science, or made one serious effort towards the improvement of mankind.

Blessed with such a memory as this, and with a good judgment, what might not the professional man accomplish. The divine might collect together all the heathen systems of philosophy, trace and attribute them as much as he ought to an early revelation, become thoroughly versed in antiquity, and throw light upon many dark points of our religion. The physician might remember the various modes of treatment prescribed in medical books, the virtues of all the drugs and medicaments of which he ever read, and, when called upon, apply his learning with unparalleled efficacy. The lawyer might explain the law on any subject, settle the most doubtful questions, and bear down all opposition which quibbling and sophistry so often make to justice. Of the truth of this remark there are two eminent examples, in countries where law is most respected and best known. Erskine, the greatest lawyer in England, and Parsons, probably the greatest in the United States, have memories uncommonly retentive. [*To be continued.*]

TO THE EDITORS OF THE LITERARY CABINET.

GENTLEMEN,

IN compliance with the request of W. X. Y. in No. 9. p. 70. of the Cabinet, I will endeavour to analyse his syllogism, and point out to him the incorrectness of its construction.

In syllogisms like that which he has given, the *major* is always a disjunctive proposition, which affirms that one, and *but* one, of the several *predicates* enumerated, belongs to the *subject;* the *minor* either joins one of the predicates to the *subject*, in which case the conclusion rejects all the others; or it disjoins all the predicates but one, and *this* of course, the conclusion must establish.

With these principles in view the analysis will not be difficult.

Major proposition, "It rains or it does not rain." With *it*, the subject of this proposition, one of the predicates, *raining* or *not raining*, is affirmed to agree. The *minor*, "it does not rain," joins with the subject the latter predicate of the major, viz. *not raining*. Therefore, according to the rule laid down above, the conclusion must reject the former predicate, viz. *raining*, and stand thus, "therefore it does not rain."

Syllogism corrected.

It either rains, or does not rain.
It does not rain;
Therefore it does not rain.

LOCKE.